

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Alternatives will have 53 AmeriCorps Members who will provide mentoring, implement pro-social skill building instruction, and provide academic enrichment activities at Jane H Bryan Elementary in Hampton, and at Horace H Epes Elementary, Willis A Jenkins Elementary, and LF Palmer Elementary in Newport News, VA. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps Members will be responsible for impacting 1066 unduplicated number of students by increasing the pro-social skills of 650 PreK-1 students; increasing the literacy knowledge and skills of 336 students grades 3-5; increasing the critical thinking skills of 120 students grades 3-5; and leveraging 144 K-5th grade students in service learning to implement 12 community service projects addressing school and/or community needs.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of School Turnaround. The CNCS investment of \$269,057 will be matched with \$183,451, \$131,232 of state/local funding and \$52,219 in private/other funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### 2. RATIONALE AND APPROACH/PROGRAM DESIGN

The PASS for Learning Program's desired outcome is to improve the academic performance and academic engagement of elementary students attending 4 schools on the Virginia Peninsula identified as "turnaround schools" by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

A. PROBLEM/NEED: Hampton and Newport News are the two largest localities on the Virginia Peninsula with a combined population of 318,155 (Hampton: 137,436; Newport News, 180,719). Both localities have a large African American population -- Hampton 49.6% and Newport News 40.7% and a large military population. For many children in these two urban communities, life is filled with economic challenge, limited family support, health challenges, and academic difficulty. These circumstances result in children who are not fully prepared to enter school ready to learn, and who are at risk for engaging in negative behaviors adversely effecting themselves, their peers, and their community. High rates of military population coincide with increased risk factors including high rates of transiency/mobility thus decreasing the presence of consistent supportive adult role models in the lives of children. In Hampton 23.7%, and in Newport News 22.7%, of young people 0-17 live in poverty -both rates are higher than statewide average of 14.6%. Likewise, 57.7% of Hampton City Schools students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch while in Newport News 60.4% qualify. (Kids

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Count, Virginia). According to the Peninsula Community Foundation, only 21% of adults living in Hampton and Newport News have post high school education. Additional key statistical descriptors reveal that: Children living in poverty in single parent households is higher than the statewide average; 3rd grade SOL scores are below the statewide average; 1400+ children under 5 are in federally subsidized child care; 600+ are wait-listed for Head Start or Early Head Start. Both communities have higher incidents of juvenile violence and youth/young adult gang activities than the statewide average. The effect of poor social/emotional development of young people is evident in a review of 2010/11 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data from both school divisions. Hampton and Newport News three highest risk factors included: Low Neighborhood Attachment, Community Transitions and Mobility and Community Disorganization. The three lowest reported protective factors were Community Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement, School Rewards for Pro-social Involvement and Community Rewards for Pro-Social Involvement.

Alternatives, in partnership with Hampton City Schools (HCS) and Newport News Public Schools (NNPS), is proposing to implement the Peninsula AmeriCorps Service and Support for Learning Program (PASS for Learning) to support school turnaround efforts at Jane H. Bryan Elementary (Hampton); LF Palmer Elementary, Willis A Jenkins Elementary and Horace H Epes Elementary (Newport News) with a combined student population of 1,878 students. All four schools have been identified as being among the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools in Virginia based on overall student performance in reading and mathematics. The VDOE has established an achievement success rate of 75% for English and 70% for Math and Science. For School Year 2012/13, Bryan's reading and math rates were 44%/67%; Palmer was 51%/48%; Jenkins was 42%/46%; and Epes was 41%/52%. For economically disadvantaged subgroups scores were on average 5% lower than the school average for both reading and math. In addition to academic challenges, data identifies behavioral challenges as well. In School Year 11/12, Bryan, population of 382, documented 81 disorderly or disruptive behavior offenses; Palmer, population 524, documented 161 offenses against others; Jenkins, population 450, documented 81 offenses against others; and Epes, population 522, documented 94 offenses against others. Alternatives collaborated with division leadership for both LEA's to identify four focus areas in which AmeriCorps Members will provide added value to their turnaround efforts: 1) establishing mentoring relationships with underachieving children especially those from single parent families or military families; 2) implementation of structured activities that promote pro-social skills; 3) provision of high quality academic enrichment activities that support reading and literacy; 4) provision of high quality academic enrichment activities to support critical

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thinking skills required in math and science. Through consultation with principals and the out of school time coordinators at each division, it was determined that Members would provide support both during the school day as well as in afterschool programs currently implemented at each of the four schools. AmeriCorps Members, recruited from potentially 10 different area colleges and universities, are uniquely suited as an effective means to increase the academic success of students K-5th grade especially in English and Math. Based on the needs of students, staff from each division developed the types of activities which most supported their school goals. Unlike community volunteers who may serve in episodic opportunities, AmeriCorps Members will commit to a consistent service contract, receive specific training in evidenced-based curricula as well as principles of child/youth development. Members will be recruited who are human service/education majors and already have a natural enthusiasm and passion for learning and working with children. Members will be providing support for a "value added" program component which currently does not exist at identified schools. Because all of the service activities include experiential learning through group games and exercises, the Members will be demonstrating problem solving, decision making, and interpersonal skills while they are facilitating lessons. AmeriCorps provides added value to Alternatives, NNPS, and HCS because their presence exponentially increases the schools' ability to foster a supportive school culture that improves attendance, discipline, addresses non-academic factors that impact student achievement, provide additional time for student learning support for instruction. Member activities will assist schools in accelerating students' acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skill. PASS for Learning Members gain life experience and workforce development skills which prepare them for careers and continued civic involvement. Members promote an ethic of service to their fellow college students, thus becoming ambassadors of AmeriCorps on their college campus.

### **B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS EVIDENCE BASE AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The PASS for Learning logic model has been provided under separate cover.

Supplemental information to Logic Model Chart: Potential Contribution of Members to Address Needs: Alternatives is requesting a total of 20.23 MSY divided into 4 Full Time Members; 4 Half Time, 20 Reduced Half Time; and 25 Quarter Time slots. Members will be divided into school teams with 1 Full Time, 1 Half Time, 5 Reduced Half Time, and 6 Quarter Time Members per school site. 1 Quarter Time Member will be rove between school sites as a substitute as needed. Service activities will occur 3 hours/day, 5 days/week during the school day as well as 3.5 hours/week x 5 days per week during

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afterschool hours. During the Summer, Members will provide academic enrichment programs at the summer programs operated at each school site by both localities averaging 3 hours/day five days/week for 9 weeks. The number of positions, configuration of slots, and team configurations for the academic year and summer were based on ability of each school to meaningfully integrate AmeriCorps Members into their school culture, provide meaningful opportunities for Members to authentically engage with students, form meaningful relationships with other Members, and maintain time for training, reflection, and personal commitments. Based on input from HCS and NNPS leadership, balancing service hours both during the school day and on out of school time activities linked to school day learning was optimal and thus provided focused service during the 2:30 - 6:00 timeframe as well as during the summer. Service activities will be designed to coincide with each 9 week grading period.

Both Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools have identified 4 areas of focus for AmeriCorps members support to their school turnaround plans: 1) supportive relationships; 2) intentional development of pro-social skills to enhance school climate; 2) literacy enrichment activities that enhance pleasure of reading and reading comprehension; and 3) development of critical thinking skills to support math and science. Curriculum activities are suitable for both implementation during the school day as well as during afterschool programs and will occur during both the academic year and during the summer to prevent loss of academic gains.

Coordination for Multiple Sites: Alternatives will coordinate turnaround efforts between the two divisions by centralizing recruitment, enrollment, orientation, and training. Alternatives will coordinate with liaisons from both divisions so that the curriculum training is provided immediately prior to implementation and will provide on-site monitoring of activities across sites to ensure maximum benefits of lessons learned and best practices. All PASS for Learning Members will meet once per month for additional training in curriculum/enrichment activities and to debrief their experience. Community wide service projects will be coordinated three times per year across sites to align with 9/11 Day of Caring, MLK Day of Service, and Global Youth Service Day planned in coordination with the existing PASS AmeriCorps Program. Members will also be connected with the United Way Virginia Peninsula's volunteer site to deepen their connection to the community through community wide service opportunities. Communication of the AmeriCorps brand through sharing of Great Stories, photos, and social media will be coordinated through Alternatives to ensure consistency of messaging and enhance Members affiliation with National AmeriCorps Service.

The PASS for Learning Program Director will coordinate with the HCS Out of School Time

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Coordinator and the NNPS Youth Development Coordinator regarding orientation to each division's mission, vision, and goals; as well as coordinate with building principals to provide school specific orientation to include introduction at staff meeting and sharing with building staff the goals and purpose of the PASS for Learning program.

Addressing Multiple Student Needs: Member service activities are designed to address multiple needs of students including: 1) enhancing school culture by developing pro-social skills of students through implementation of AI's Pals, Kids on the Block, 8 Kinds of Mind and mentoring relationships; 2) accelerating acquisition of reading knowledge and skill through provision Leaders as Readers reading comprehension activities; and 3) accelerating acquisition of math skills by developing inquiry and critical thinking skills utilizing NASA Summer of Innovation lessons and community based service learning.

### EVIDENCE BASE

Supportive Relationships: Alternatives will utilize the best practices identified through Big Brothers/Big Sisters School Based Mentoring documented in "Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study"; Aug 1, 2007, Author(s): Feldman, Amy F.; Grossman, Jean Baldwin; Herrera, Carla; Jucovy, Linda Z.; Kauh, Tina J.; et al. Such best practices include beginning the match by October; providing training to Members regarding how to form high quality mentoring relationships; sustaining the relationship throughout the year by Members meeting at least one hour per week with mentees; establishing a ratio of no more than 1 Member to 3 students. Members will be matched based on shared interests and needs of the child as identified by school guidance. Members will bridge summer break through continuing contact with mentees involved in summer programs and through verbal or written communication sent directly home to students.

Development of Pro-Social Skills. Members will be trained to implement "AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices" to children K-1 and "AI's Pals: Booster Curriculum" to children grades 2-5. AI's Pals has been identified as an evidenced based model prevention program by the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as well as a model program by the US Department of Education. Cross site experimental studies conducted nationally by Wingspan, LLC (product developer) consistently indicate that children who are engaged in AI's Pals curriculum are two to five times more likely to develop pro-social skills than children who are not. For the past seven years Alternatives has implemented AI's Pals in early childhood centers on the Virginia Peninsula with evaluation results consistent with those cited by the product developer. To

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supplement this foundational curriculum, Members will also engage students K-2 in Kids on the Block puppet scripts and activities which is a national program with demonstrated results in increasing children's appreciation of people with special needs. Members will engage students grades 3-5 in "8 Kinds of Mind" which is based on the theory of multiple intelligences developed by Howard Gardner at Harvard University. Curriculum activities facilitate students' exploring each type of intelligence and identifying their own innate preferences. Use of multiple intelligences theory to enhance learning is a current strategy of both Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools.

Literacy Enrichment. Members will engage students in 12 weeks of literacy enrichment activities utilizing 3 developmental reading strategies: Collection of real books which students will take home; reading aloud to students and having students read aloud; and providing time for reflection and independent reading. These strategies are based on best practices identified in Getting Started: Manageable Literacy Practices; Ivey, Gay Educational Leadership, 11/2002.

Critical Thinking Skills to Support Math/Science. Members will utilize lessons developed through the NASA Summer of Innovation Project. NASA's education specialists have developed themed units and camps of NASA content to include selected units and camps are specific, hands-on, problem-based activities that are appropriate for the summer learning setting. The lessons are designed to expand both the breadth and depth of school- and community-based partners' ability to provide meaningful, educational and exciting STEM experiences to students in grades 4-9 who traditionally have been underrepresented in STEM fields. In addition, Members will utilize community based service learning to engage students K-5 in defining what is "service"; assessing their neighborhood or school; identifying an issue about which they have passion; identifying root causes of the issue; developing and implementing a service project to address the root cause; and engaging in reflection about the process. Service learning is a recognized methodology by America's Service Commission and America's Promise.

PASS for Learning activities align with research documented in "Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging afterschool and summer learning for student success", Petersen, T. K. (ED), Washington, DC 2013. Activities provide small group formats that foster supportive relationships between Members and students, engage students in experiential activities, and foster positive peer relationships. Curricula activities were identified to align with SAFE Quality Standards - Sequential and Structured, Active, Focused, and Explicit in Content. Each curriculum has been nationally reviewed and endorsed as a best practice for complementary learning. The program designed is evidenced-informed based on research studies conducted by the University of California which indicate the provision of High

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Quality SAFE afterschool activities will contribute to the reduction of the achievement gap including reductions among minority or under-served populations. The Program Design is consistent with the US DOE 21st Century Community Learning guidance regarding the availability of at least 360 hours of afterschool enrichment and 60 available hours for Summer Learning and reflect the 8 components present in high-quality afterschool programs including: Effective Partnerships, Strong Involvement of Families, Enriching Learning Opportunities, Linkages between School-Day and Afterschool Personnel, Quality staff; Evaluation, and Strong Management.

### **C. MEMBER TRAINING**

**ORIENTATION:** Upon notification of the grant award, Alternatives PASS for Learning Project Staff will meet with HCS and NNPS leadership to review training topics and training calendar. Members will receive seven days of orientation at which time they will review information contained in the "PASS for Learning Member Manual" including information regarding the National AmeriCorps Initiative; Member policies and procedures; Information on the goals and activities of each Priority School; Schedule of Distribution of Living Allowances; Training Schedule with topics; Schedule of Community wide Service Events; Timesheet and Mileage reimbursement forms; Emergency Information Forms; Media and Image Release Forms; Overview of Alternatives vision, mission, and service delivery; and contact information for Alternatives, Hampton City Schools, and Newport News Public Schools staff. During orientation staff will ensure that all background check information and eligibility information is documented. Orientation sessions also include team building activities among Members, Alternatives, and school staff to foster collegial relationships. Members will also be provided an overview of their service sites and characteristics of students, and information regarding Alternatives community partners.

Throughout their service contract period, Members will receive training in the specific enrichment curricula they will be implementing for that 9 week segment; providing them time to role play classroom management, curriculum activities, visit their service sites, and engage in team building activities. Members will receive training on the following topics: community characteristics and resources, youth development principles, facilitation skills, multiple intelligences, creativity and project planning. Before delivering curriculum lessons, Members will receive intensive training specific to that curriculum, observe a lesson being facilitated by staff, and receive on-site coaching to ensure implementation with fidelity. Alternatives staff will provide on-site observation to provide immediate feedback regarding implementation of the enrichment curriculum lessons.

**OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED:** Members will also

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participate in weekly 3 hour supervision/planning meetings devoted to teambuilding, review of required paperwork, compliance with online data entry, prohibited activities, with time devoted to reflection and preparation of service activities. During these meetings, Members will have opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned to enhance continual improvement. Members will receive semi-annual evaluations with their site supervisor, but may experience 1-on-1 supervision as requested by Members or Supervisors.

**COORDINATE TRAINING OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS WITH SCHOOL STAFF:** The Site Supervisor will maintain weekly contact with the building staff at each school site to obtain feedback on Member service activities and to align training needs based on the point in time needs of the students/families. After each nine week grading period, the Site Supervisor will meet with HCS and NNPS staff to review academic achievement of K-5th grade students, and align training needs to optimize Member support of students.

### D. AMERICORPS MEMBER SUPERVISION

**PLAN FOR SUPERVISION:** The Site supervisor for PASS for Learning Members will be Ragen Johnson who has a Master of Public Administration from Norwich University, 2009, and a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from Christopher Newport University, 2006. Since 2005, Ms. Johnson has coordinated the implementation of the federally recognized prevention curriculum for 30 partnering sites in Hampton and Newport News reaching over 1800 PreK-2nd grade children. Her responsibilities include: maintaining partnerships with HCS, NNPS, and community organizations, coordinating teacher training , conducting classroom observations, conducting parent education sessions, and ensuring accurate evaluation data management. In addition, since 2009, Ms. Johnson has served as liaison and site supervisor for social work college interns assigned to Alternatives. Since 11/12, Ms. Johnson has served on Alternatives Joint Quality Improvement Team which coordinates quality experience for both volunteers and AmeriCorps Members. Through this Team she has received training in AmeriCorps policies and procedures, prohibited activities, as well as PASS Program Design Handbook.

Upon receipt of grant award, Ms. Johnson will meet with the Executive Director and Finance Director regarding Alternatives' PASS for Learning Program Design Handbook which outlines the governance and operating policies and procedures for AmeriCorps Members. To ensure consistent application of all AmeriCorps policies and procedures, Ms. Johnson will meet monthly with Quality Improvement Team to review compliance, share lessons learned, and adjust procedures to ensure compliance with

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requirements, high enrollment and retention rates, and quality Member service and experience.

**COORDINATION OF SUPERVISION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:** In her role as Site Supervisor, Ms. Johnson will provide training in enrichment curriculum, technical assistance and on-site coaching regarding behavior management, facilitation, student engagement, and partnership development. She will meet bi-weekly with school staff and participate quarterly in meetings with Division Leadership and Alternatives Executive Director to review Performance Measures and service effectiveness. She will conduct initial interviews with Members to clarify role, responsibilities, and determine Member goals; meet weekly with PASS for Learning Members to provide feedback regarding execution of service activities; ensure compliance with "branding" of AmeriCorps through wearing of gear and use of AmeriCorps language of service; and serve as liaison between Members and school staff. In addition, Ms. Johnson will ensure enrolment and exiting of Members within the required 30 day timeframe, review documentation of timesheets to ensure proper documentation of service time, breaks, and training; ensure completion of service hours over the course of the contract period; and ensure that Members are knowledgeable of "Life after AmeriCorps" opportunities. As Site Supervisor she will assist with the coordination of transportation and assist in solving logistical or programmatic problems.

### **E. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION**

Alternatives and PASS for Learning AmeriCorps Members will participate with Virginia sponsored state or regional AmeriCorps State Programs' Launch activities to build relationships among Members, and foster a sense of belonging and commitment to the national AmeriCorps program. During the Launch, all Members will recite the AmeriCorps Pledge. During the Members' orientation to PASS for Learning, Alternatives will provide a history of the national service program and provide a list of national service resources in the member handbook. At least annually, Members will receive information about other forms of national service such as Teach for America and NCCC, and be encouraged to participate in webinars that continue to foster an ethic of service to the community. To foster a sense of connection to the AmeriCorps brand, Members will receive 4 AmeriCorps shirts to wear. Members will be required to wear AmeriCorps gear during service activities and will be monitored for compliance. Alternatives supervisor and school staff will ensure that Members wear their gear and a supply of shirts will be provided to each site for use by Members when they have either forgotten their gear or it has become dirty during service. Alternatives will include the AmeriCorps logo on the home page of its website and social media pages. "Great Stories" of Member service in action will be included on the website and in quarterly reports to HCS, NNPS, Virginia

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Office on Volunteerism and Community Service, and submitted to the Virginia Partnership on Out of School Time newsletter. AmeriCorps branding will appear at Alternatives offices, and at each of the school sites.

To prepare Members to speak about their service in the community, Alternatives will provide monthly sessions in which Members will share and write Great Stories which will be posted on Alternatives website and forwarded to each school to be shared with staff and families. Members will also be trained in public speaking and presentation skills to prepare them to speak at public events and Board meetings about their experience.

### Organizational Capability

#### 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

##### A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

Alternatives, Inc., founded in 1973, is a nationally recognized community based nonprofit impacting the social, emotional, academic and civic abilities of young people ages 3-18 on the Virginia Peninsula. The agency's vision is "Healthy, principled, and creative young people valued as members of the community". Alternatives' annual budget is approximately one million dollars, and relies on diversified funding sources including local, state, and federal grants; donations; foundation grants; and corporate contributions. The Hampton Newport News Community Services Board contracts with Alternatives for its primary prevention programs, and the agency has managed federal grants including US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families -\$750,000 three year Compassion Capital grant. Throughout its 40 year history, the staff and Board of Alternatives have successfully raised funds to support its programs and services resulting in multi-year grants from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and the City of Hampton; and service contracts with Newport News Public Schools and Hampton City Schools. Currently percentage of revenue from diversified sources includes: 8% Individuals; 22% Foundations and Corporations; 22% Government Grants; 45% Service Contracts; and 3% miscellaneous income.

During its four year history as a sub-grantee of the Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service, Alternatives has expanded its current AmeriCorps program from 5.1 MSY in 2009 to 17.44 MSY in FY12/13 thus impacting 5,000 children.

**STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE:** Alternatives' staff consists of 11 employees, governed by an 18 member Board of Directors. Alternatives utilizes an Executive Team comprised of Executive Director, Creativity Director, and Director of Youth Civic Engagement. Program

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management occurs through teamwork with staff managing functional areas for which they have expertise and authority. Rather than a center based organization, Alternatives maintains collaborative partnerships with over 60 community partners.

### **ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE OF STAFF:**

Executive Director -- Kathryn Johnson will oversee grant management, financial accountability, and compliance with AmeriCorps regulations; serve as primary point of contact with the Office of Volunteerism and Community Service, local school divisions' administrative leadership, and local funders. Ms. Johnson has four years experience in AmeriCorps grant management, twenty years experience in managing federal, state, and local grants and has served as a peer reviewer and on the Advisory Committee to provide input on the Virginia Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning RFA process.

Director of Finance -- Deidre Swindell will provide financial management; ensure compliance with generally accepted principals of accounting; develop project and revenue codes to ensure proper accountability for personnel time and project expenses including both CNCS requested funds and match funds; and ensure compliance with all background checks for staff and Members. Ms. Swindell has a Masters Degree in Accounting from Strayer University, 16 years of financial management experience, and four years experience in AmeriCorps grant financial management.

Site Supervisor - Ragen Johnson will serve as the PASS for Learning Site Supervisor and will assist with recruitment and orientation, provide and coordinate training in evidenced based curricula, provide onsite technical assistance to Members regarding social emotional development and relationship building with children; serve as liaison with building principals and teachers; assist with My AmeriCorps week activities and implementation of community service projects; as well as ensure Member compliance with required documentation of service time, activities, and expenditures, and maintaining AmeriCorps gear to ensure appropriate branding of the Program.

Evelyn Barnes, Administrative Assistant, will provide administrative oversight of all Member files ensuring compliance with AmeriCorps regulations regarding proof of citizenship, documentation regarding Member verification of review of policies and procedures, distribution of living allowance, and communication with project staff regarding Members' compliance with Alternatives' AmeriCorps procedures.

**COORDINATION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:** Members will receive a complete background check and participate in a group interview process which will include Alternatives staff and staff from Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools. The interview process will include

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opportunities for Members to engage in conversation with all representatives who will assess Member qualifications based on the above stated criteria. After the interviews, staff from Alternatives, HCS, and NNPS will debrief to identify qualified Members and to assign Members to teams based on best fit for the Member and the school. School division staff will participate in the creation of the composition of the teams who will serve at each school site. The Out of School Time Coordinator for Hampton City Schools and the Youth Development Director for Newport News Public Schools will serve as liaisons to each division and school leadership will participate in quarterly meetings to assess program effectiveness and course correct service activities for continuous improvement.

### **C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**PREVENT AND DETECT COMPLIANCE ISSUES:** The Executive Director will meet quarterly with Alternatives' PASS for Learning Program team to review the AmeriCorps expectations, prohibited activities, and ensure compliance with required financial and programmatic procedures. Issues of non-compliance will be addressed according to the Program Design Handbook developed in consultation with the Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service.

**ACCOUNTABILITY OF PARTNERS:** In addition, the Executive Director and Site Supervisor will meet with HCS and NNPS division and building staff to provide the PASS for Learning Program Management Design Handbook which includes all AmeriCorps related policies and procedures. The Executive Director, Finance Director will meet monthly with the Quality Improvement Team to review policy and/or financial compliance especially ensuring the enrollment and exiting of Members within a 30 day period of time, ratio of expenditures to Project Year, and ratio of hours served compared to contract. HCS and NNPS leadership will be apprised of any non-compliance issues which will be addressed in accordance with the Program Design Handbook.

**C. PAST PERFORMANCE AS A FORMULA GRANTEE:** Alternatives currently manages the Peninsula AmeriCorps Service and Support program which engages 68 college aged Members (17.44 MSY) in service throughout the Virginia Peninsula with a CNCS contribution of \$231,951 and match support of \$127,698. PASS Members support the development of pro-social skills, civic leadership, and empowerment of children and youth ages 3-18. Current PASS Members serve in multiple locations throughout the Virginia Peninsula via Alternatives' partnerships with youth serving organizations and early childhood centers and have the ability to form supportive relationships over a period of 4-6 weeks or intermittently throughout the year. Alternatives' PASS program met or exceeded all of its performance measures for FY11/12 with a 97% retention rate of Members, and met or exceeded

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Performance Measures for FY12/13.

RECRUITING AND ENROLLMENT: Alternatives recruits young adults for AmeriCorps service who reflect the general demographic composition of Hampton and Newport News -- thereby providing role models for students. Currently, 80% of Alternatives' PASS Members are people of color -- primarily due to the focused recruitment activities conducted in partnership with Hampton University (HU) -- a Historically Black College/University. Successful recruitment activities have included building partnerships with college staff and engaging current AmeriCorps Members to recruit their peers especially raising awareness during My AmeriCorps Week each year. Using Facebook as a social media tool, Members invited fellow students to the activities which resulted in increased participation by students.

All Members are recruited for the following qualifications: their passion/ethic for service, their belief in the potential of all youth, their ability to form positive relationships with youth and adults, their availability and flexibility of schedule, their desire to serve with elementary students and families, their commitment to quality, excellence, and life-long learning.

In FY12/13, Alternatives had a 104% recruitment rate and 94% retention rate. For FY13/14, Alternatives is on track for a 100% recruitment rate and 100% retention rate. The current PASS Program was named among the 52 Most Innovative AmeriCorps Programs in the nation by America's Service Commission and Innovations in Civic Participation 2010.

### D. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

FEEDBACK: Alternatives PASS for Learning Site Supervisor will meet bi-weekly with Members, Principals and School staff to align the service activities to the academic needs of children and families and review benchmark scores, grades, and disciplinary data reports. Feedback from students will be obtained monthly through surveys and interviews.

USE OF DATA TO INFORM IMPROVEMENT: Division administrative leadership will meet quarterly with the Executive Director and Site Supervisor to review AmeriCorps Performance Measures data -- identifying strengths and lessons learned as well as review AmeriCorps Performance Measure outcomes with school achievement data. Members will engage children in reflection activities that provide qualitative data regarding student engagement and satisfaction with activities. Parent satisfaction surveys will be completed during family engagement activities, during community service projects, and informally through contact with Members and Site Supervisor. This qualitative and data drive review will assist in the continual development of quality service as well as enhanced

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Member experience.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

REASONABLE COSTS: The Corporation cost for this proposal is \$13,300 per MSY for the equivalent of 20.23 MSY allocated through Full Time, Half Time, Reduced Half Time, and Quarter Time slots serving during the academic year and summer contract periods. The proposed program design requires service delivery during school hours, afterschool and summer. The living allowance disbursement for members is as follows: Full Time Members - \$12,100 plus health insurance benefits; Half Time Members - \$6,000; Reduced Half Time Members - \$4,300; Quarter Time Members - \$2,500. All positions will received a mileage reimbursement at Alternative's volunteer rate. Member slot allocation will increase ability of Members to form supportive relationships, and provide for a lower Member/child ratio for mentoring and out of school time enrichment activities.

COST-EFFECTIVE: Personnel, program, and administrative support will be funded through in-kind, private, state and local and cash match. Corporation funds will support a quality service experience through living allowances, AmeriCorps gear, travel reimbursement and training. The grantee share of 41% consists of either secured funds or alignment of existing in-kind funds representing a positive investment in social benefits which are more cost effective than providing intervention and remediation by counselors or other mental health professionals.

NON-SUPPLANT: HCS and NNPS are providing in-kind support of facilities, transportation, and staff and program activities do not supplant or divert SIG funds from their primary stated purpose.

### **BUDGET ADEQUACY**

NON-CNCS FUNDING AND RESOURCES: The budget, as outlined in the budget section, is adequate to meet recruitment/retention goals and performance measures as outlined in this narrative. Alternatives' 41% grantee share is \$183,451 which is obtained with non-federal resources through the continued alignment of agency funding from the City of Hampton, Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board, Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, Corporate Contributions, Unity Way, Newport News Parks and Recreation, Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools facility use at South Morrison Family Education Center (936 sq. ft. at a rate of \$1.25 per sq. ft.), and four school sites for office/meeting space (750 sq. ft. per school at a rate of \$1.00 per sq. ft.).

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

Alternatives will participate in the national evaluation for school turnaround.

### **Amendment Justification**

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N/A

### Clarification Summary

Additional Clarification Items submitted 4/15/2014:

In consideration of local needs and current distribution of resources to high need schools, the proposed PASS for Learning application best aligns to the Tier II application eligibility. During the development phase of this proposal, the leadership of both LEA's identified the proposed schools based on academic needs of the students, overall school performance, as well as a resource analysis that identified gaps in resources allocated for under performing schools. The inclusion of these four schools in the PASS for Learning program best utilizes Corporation Funds to address local community and school needs, by leveraging the effective partnership between Alternatives, Hampton City Schools, Newport News Public Schools, and area universities.

Clarification Items:

2. The Virginia Department of Education, under an ESEA Flexibility waiver granted on March 5, 2013, has established AMOs designed to reduce proficiency gaps between students in high performing and low performing schools within six years. Low performing Title I schools identified as Priority and Focus schools are subject to specific interventions for school improvement plans. Schools are Accredited with Warning if its adjusted pass rates for the four core subjects are below the achievement levels required for full accreditation. Schools that receive this rating undergo academic reviews and are required to adopt and implement school improvement plans. For those warned in English and Math, they are required to adopt instructional programs proven by research to be effective in raising achievement in these subjects. All four schools to be served by PASS for Learning are school wide Title I schools with Jane H Bryan and Willis A Jenkins designated as Priority Schools, LF Palmer is a Focus School, and Horace H Epes is Accredited with Warning in English and Math. Based on ESEA Flexibility waiver established by Virginia Department of Education, all schools are under School Improvement Plans based on the low academic performance of students in core subjects. Each school improvement plan is aligned with the turnaround principles under ESEA flexibility and all schools are considered eligible for inclusion in this proposal based on the following RFP excerpt found on page 6 of the RFP “CNCS will support new . . . Tier I Education grantees, which will work with students in schools implementing turnaround models . . . or turnaround principles under ESEA flexibility.” Members will be assigned to each school as follows with 1 QT Member who will serve as a roving

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substitute between schools.

Jane H Bryan Elementary School, Hampton City Schools, Hampton, VA

#510180000743 ; Priority - Members: 1 FT, 1HT, 5 RHT, 6 QT

Willis A. Jenkins, Newport News Public Schools, Newport News, VA

#510264001077 ; Priority - Members: 1 FT, 1HT, 5 RHT, 6 QT

LF Palmer, Newport News Public Schools, Newport News, VA

#5102646001060 - Focus Schools with School Improvement Plan under VDOE Flexibility Waiver Guidelines - Members: 1 FT, 1HT, 5 RHT, 6 QT

Horace H Epes, Newport News Public Schools, Newport News, VA

#510264001054 ; Accredited with Warning with School Improvement Plan Under VDOE Flexibility Waiver Guidelines - Members: 1 FT, 1HT, 5 RHT, 6 QT

- b. Members will not be engaged in service activities that are associated with their academic course work, internships or practicum.
- c. Each LEA has signed a letter, referencing the 2014-15 school year and stipulating that once funding is awarded Alternatives, LEA Division leadership and building principals will enter into a written partnership agreement.
- d. Each LEA and school principal has signed a letter of commitment affirming that proposed service activities are in alignment with the divisions; turnaround plan and the individual school;s improvement plans.
- e. Each LEA has confirmed that they will share aggregated student and school data with Alternatives for purposes of the National Evaluation.
- f. Proposed academic schedule for SY14/15 is September 2, 2014 ; June 15, 2015. Member Term of Service is 9/1/14 ; 8/31/2015. Alternatives, as part of its AmeriCorps State PASS program, continually conducts outreach activities to alert college students regarding AC opportunities and maintains an ongoing list of interested young adults. If unexpected delays in recruitment occur, Alternatives will adjust service hours and schedule of activities with each school partner to ensure that Members have meaningful service and that students are engaged in meaningful academic enrichment activities ; either through providing before school activities or activities during scheduled school breaks/holidays.
- g. School Supervision will be provided by a lead teacher designated at each of the participating schools. Lead teachers will be identified by the LEA leadership and building principals. The lead teacher will be the central point of contact for school related issues for the AC Members and the lead teacher will serve a school liaison to the PASS Site Supervisor. The Site Supervisor and lead teacher, in

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coordination with the building principal, will operate as a team in providing support to Members as well as ensuring that Members provide high quality service to students.

h. Member travel expenses are reasonable, necessary and allowable. Members will be reimbursed for travel when they are required to travel from their school site to Alternatives<sub>2</sub> administrative offices in Hampton or its satellite office in Newport News, or to travel from one school site to another for training or joint community service projects. Mileage is calculated on the average distance round trip from Alternatives<sub>2</sub> office to school sites and is reimbursed at .25/mile which represents 50% of Alternatives<sub>2</sub> Board approved staff mileage reimbursement rate. This rate accounts for the increased time required to travel due to heavy traffic congestion in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Such congestion increases car related expenses per mile. In addition, Members will participate in the 20th Anniversary Launch event hosted by the Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service schedule to be held in Richmond, Va.

i. The PASS for Learning proposal is cost effective in that it is designed to maximize *“braided funding”* which aligns CNCS funding, as well as public and private funding to support services that not only enhance the school day, but extend learning beyond school hours. Alternatives<sub>2</sub> 41% match exceeds the required match for CNCS funding and leverages a diverse mix of public and private local funding thus enhancing sustainability in the future. The total program budget of \$452,508 is 15% lower than the estimated value for the described level of supports and program activities. While AC Members do not replace professional staff during the school day or in afterschool programs, their value added equivalent is \$531,340.95 based on the estimated regional hourly rate of \$12.45 per hour for teaching assistants, required fringe benefits, and indirect costs. The Fair Market Equivalent Value is based on statistics reported by the US Department of Labor Statistics as reported in the Virginia-Pilot in 2011.

j. The PASS for Learning requested start date is 9/1/2014 and member enrollment period start date of 9/1/2014.

4. Strategic Engagement. Alternatives currently conducts outreach to the local office of Rehabilitative Services, nonprofit organizations that engage people with disabilities such as Versability (ARC of the Virginia Peninsula). Alternative is not currently targeting any slots for members with disabilities and is not requesting additional slots for people with disabilities.

5. Alternatives is not requesting any No-Cost MSYs.

6. Healthcare

a. Name of the health insurance provider: Summit America

b. Identified through direct marketing and information provided by Virginia Office on Volunteerism

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and Community Service

c-e. It is currently unclear if Summit America will provide MEC through its coverage during Project Year 2014/15. Alternatives is working closely with Program Officers of the Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service, Summit America staff, and the organization's employee health insurance carrier to determine best options for providing Full Time Members with coverage that complies with the Affordable Care Act.

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A

### **Grant Characteristics**